

Longing and Memory



Los Angeles County Museum of Art

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Art objects (United States, born 1957, *WHAT'S LEFT* 1993–97), working with white braided chain, approximately 82 x 26 x 24 (h) (l) (d), 8 x 68 x 61 (h) (l) (d), collection of the artist.

Longing and Memory

The places we have known do not belong only to the world of space on which we map them for our convenience. None of them was ever more than a thin slice, held between the contiguous impressions that composed our life at that time; the memory of a particular image is but regret for a particular moment; and houses, roads, avenues, are as fugitive, alas, as the years.

Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*

The artists included in this exhibition share an involvement with a beauty and poignancy that elicits longing. They neither question nor judge the desire to indulge in the evocation or fantasy of the past. Nostalgia, often maligned as a falsification of history, is acknowledged by them as an undeniable and seductive phenomenon, whose expression sheds light on the current cultural moment. The preoccupation with transience and loss may be a response to the impending end of the century and millennium, but it is also a means of negotiating the hyperstimulated environment of the nineties, where time and events move so quickly that the sense of authentic experience is often jeopardized. In a world of such rapid dislocation and change, one can be nostalgic for a seemingly elusive and fragile present.

Each of the artists in this exhibition expresses longing in an individual way and with different means. Through film, photography, painting, sculpture, and drawing, they examine issues of time, memory, and desire. That these concerns are currently widespread is borne out by the fact that these artists come from as far north as Vancouver, Canada, as far south as Buenos Aires, from both coasts of the United States, and from England.

In his *Subject to a Film: Marnie*, a montage based on the robbery sequence from Alfred Hitchcock's 1964 film *Marnie*, Vancouver-based artist Stan Douglas creates a new mystery. Its retrospective power derives from the combination of blurred and scratched black-and-white film stock, early-sixties fashions, and the melancholy sound of a movie projector. However, shot in a contemporary office outfitted with computers and other artifacts of late-



twentieth-century life, the film actually blurs distinctions between past and present, underscoring the illusory, and often contradictory, aspects of memory.

From New York, Jim Hodges dismantles and then reconfigures inexpensive fabric flowers into elegant curtains and bowers and pointedly utilizes the clichéd image of the spiderweb, delicately wrought in white metal chain, to signify the passage of time. By combining visual beauty with the intrinsic resonance of much-used metaphors, Hodges creates objects that both acknowledge and transcend their commonplace associations.

Guillermo Kuitca's openly melodramatic canvases depict overhead views of generic spaces in which something has either just happened or is about to occur. The Argentine artist renders maps of imagined cities, and plans for apartments, cemeteries, and grand theaters. Tears fall and blood drips from these diagrams so that, personified, they are fraught with emotion. "Come thick night," Lady

STAY

Macbeth's furtive cry, is written into the seating plan of a theater, making the arena itself seem anguished.

Los Angeles artist Sharon Lockhart's carefully constructed tableaux reference the history of visual forms, utilizing such diverse sources as Italian Renaissance portraits and French New Wave cinema. Very much of the present, they connect with the past by finding in everyday moments reflections of canonical artworks that are etched in memory.

Elizabeth Peyton, from New York, makes small paintings—most often portraits—that suggest the intense desire to prolong the experience of a book, song, or movie once the reading, listening, or viewing is completed. Whether fictional, historical, or contemporary, each subject is imbued with an imagined, almost palpable intimacy. Painted in a style reminiscent of fifties fashion illustration and shown posing imperiously or lounging carelessly, the personages in her canvases are their most characteristic selves—the self-important King Ludwig II of Bavaria, the sweet Princess Elizabeth II of England, the young and passionate Kurt Cobain—frozen in time, observable, but emotionally and physically out of reach.

Jack Pierson's baldly romantic photographs, drawings, and signs combine word and image to tap our sense of the passage of time like a familiar musical refrain. Pierson celebrates certain stereotypes of gay sensibility: easy sentimentality and a romance with a glamour that is sometimes

tawdry. Openly emotional and sexually provocative, his work is an antimonumental embrace of the quotidian, executed with a profound appreciation of visual pleasure. Pierson is a New York artist who has spent extended periods in Southern California.

Rachel Whiteread marks time and space by creating real and fictionalized traces of everyday life in works that have been cast from found objects—worn mattresses, an old hot water bottle, and a bathtub—as well as from constructed bookshelves and a room that she designed and built. The use of correction fluid in the London artist's drawings underscores her concern for ephemerality and the contingency of memory.

Contemporary Projects: *Longing and Memory* inaugurates the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's new Contemporary Projects series. These small shows, occurring annually, will include recent art in all media from around the world as well as cutting-edge work from Los Angeles. On an ongoing basis they will offer Southern California audiences opportunities to consider significant trends in contemporary culture.

Lynn Zelevansky
Associate Curator
Modern and Contemporary Art

Checklist

Stan Douglas

Canada, born 1960

Subject to a Film: Marne, 1988
16mm black-and-white film loop with sound; six minutes each rotation
Courtesy of David Zwirner Gallery, New York

Subject to a Film: Marne, 1988–96
Six gelatin-silver prints
16 x 20 in. each (40.6 x 50.8 cm)
Courtesy of David Zwirner Gallery, New York

Jim Hodges

United States, born 1957

What's Left, 1993–97
Clothing with white brass chain
Approximately 32 x 26 x 24 in.
(81.3 x 66 x 61 cm)
Collection of the artist

Untitled (Threshold), 1994–97
Silk, plastic, wire, and florist tape
84 x 60 x 10 in. (213.4 x 152.4 x 25.4 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
purchased with funds provided by Ruth
and Jacob Bloom

Already Here, Already There, 1995
Silk with thread
16 x 14 feet (4.9 x 4.3 m)
Collection of Dallas P. Price

No Dust, 1996
Mirror on canvas
28 x 22 in. (71.1 x 55.9 cm)
Collection of Dean Valentine,
Los Angeles

Untitled, 1997
Ballpoint pen and contact paper
on paper
12 x 17 in. (30.5 x 43.2 cm)
Collection of Marc Foxx, Santa Monica

Guillermo Kuitca

Argentina, born 1961

The Children's Corner, 1990
Acrylic on canvas
58 x 116 in. (147.3 x 294.6 cm)
Collection of PaineWebber Group Inc.,
New York

House Plan with Blood Flow, 1990
Acrylic on canvas
36¹/₂ x 27¹/₂ in. (92.7 x 69.9 cm)
Collection of Nan and Gene Corman,
Beverly Hills

Untitled, 1995
Oil on canvas
40 x 48 in. (101.6 x 121.9 cm)
Collection of Dean Valentine,
Los Angeles

Sharon Lockhart

United States, born 1964

Lily (Pacific Ocean, approximately 8 a.m.)
Jochen (North Sea, approximately 8 p.m.),
1995
Two chromogenic development prints,
edition 2/4
11 x 41 in. each (78.7 x 104.1 cm)
Collection of Marsha Gordon

Untitled, 1996
Chromogenic development print,
edition 4/6
73 x 109 in. (185.4 x 276.9 cm)
The Eli Broad Family Foundation,
Santa Monica

Elizabeth Peyton

United States, born 1965

Ludwig II, 1994
Oil on masonite
17 x 12 in. (43.2 x 30.5 cm)
Collection of Ludwig Koons

Blur Kurt, 1995
Oil on masonite
14 x 11 in. (35.6 x 27.9 cm)
Collection of Monica and David
Zwirner, New York

Kurt, 1995
Oil on masonite
10 x 8 in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm)
Collection of Eileen and Michael
Cohen

Princess Elizabeth, 1995
Oil on masonite
14 x 11 in. (35.6 x 27.9 cm)
Collection of S. Geller

Jarvis Cocker, 1996
Oil on board
17 x 14 in. (43.2 x 35.6 cm)
Collection of Dean Valentine,
Los Angeles

John Lydon at Randy's Rodeo, 1996
Oil on board
10 x 8 in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm)
Collection of Themistocles and
Dare Michos, Woodside, California

Sara, 1996
Oil on board
10 x 8 in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm)
The Speyer Family collection

Beck, 1997
Oil on canvas
40 x 30 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown
Enterprise

Jack Pierson

United States, born 1960

The lawn could stand another mowing
(*funny, I don't even care*), 1991
Chromogenic development print,
edition of 3
20 x 30 in. (50.8 x 76.2 cm)
Collection of Alan Hergott and
Curt Shepard

Stay, 1991
Plastic and paint
Dimensions variable
Collection of Alan Hergott and
Curt Shepard

Away from Me, 1994
Graphite on paper
13¹/₈ x 10³/₈ in. (34.9 x 27.3 cm)
Collection of Marc Selwyn,
Los Angeles

Bye Now, 1994
Graphite on paper
13¹/₈ x 10³/₈ in. (34.9 x 27.3 cm)
Estate of Marsha Kleinman,
Los Angeles

Forever, 1994
Metal and plastic
Dimensions variable
Private collection, courtesy of
Regen Projects, Los Angeles

I Never Dreamed You'd Leave
in Summer, 1994
Pixal process, acrylic lacquer
on canvas; edition 1/2
60 x 84 in. (152.4 x 213.4 cm)
Collection of David Rubin and
Rick Krueger

Rachel Whiteread

England, born 1963

Untitled (Torso), 1991
Dental plaster, waxed
4 x 9¹/₂ x 7 in. (10.2 x 24.1 x 17.8 cm)
Collection of Kathleen and Roland
Augustine, New York

Study for Wax Floor, 1992
Oil crayon, correction fluid, felt-tipped
pen, and graphite on graph paper
18 x 12 in. (45.7 x 30.5 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New
York, purchased with funds given by
Barbara G. Pine

Untitled (Transparent mattress/bed),
1992
Enamel paint, ink, and correction
fluid on graph paper
16³/₈ x 11³/₈ in. (41.3 x 29.5 cm)
Collection of Patricia and Morris
Orden, New York

Untitled (Window), 1992
Enamel paint, ink, and correction
fluid on graph paper
16³/₈ x 11³/₈ in. (41.3 x 29.5 cm)
Collection of Patricia and Morris
Orden, New York

Untitled (Chimney), 1994
Enamel paint, ink, crayon, and
correction fluid on graph paper
24 x 18 in. (61 x 45.7 cm)
Collection of Patricia and Morris
Orden, New York

Untitled (Rubber plinth), 1996
Cast rubber
27 x 30 x 14 in. (68.6 x 76.2 x 35.6 cm)
Courtesy of Luhring Augustine,
New York

Untitled (Black books), 1996–97
Plastic and steel, edition of 10
(artist's proof)
11¹/₂ x 19¹/₂ x 9 in. (29.2 x 101 x 22.9 cm)
Courtesy of Luhring Augustine,
New York

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